

expiration rules have been obtained; and

if the media file has not expired, playing the media file to the user.

17. The method of claim 16, further comprising validating a storage medium on the particular

5 playback device.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein determining comprises:

determining if a maximum number of playbacks for the media file has been reached.

10 19. The method of claim 16, wherein determining comprises:

determining if a relative expiration time for the one or more media files has passed.

20. The method of claim 16, wherein determining comprises:

determining if an absolute expiration time for the one or more media files has passed.

15 21. A content server for transferring media files to a playback device, comprising:

means for receiving a request of one or more media files to be transferred to a particular media playback device, the one or more media files having associated expiration rules;

means for obtaining information about the particular media playback device;

20 means for determining, based on the information about the particular media playback device, whether the particular media playback device has the capability to enforce the expiration rules associated with the one or more media files;

means for formatting the requested one or more media files such that they can only be rendered by the particular playback device and transferring the formatted files and the

25 expiration rules to the particular media playback device, if the media playback device has the capability to enforce the expiration rules.

22. The content server of claim 21 wherein the media files further have associated content rights and further comprising:

30 means for determining, based on the information about the particular media playback device, whether the particular media playback device satisfies the content rights associated

with the one or more media files; and

means for denying transfer of the one or more media files to the particular playback device if the particular media playback device does not satisfy the content rights.

5       23. The content server of claim 21, wherein the media files further have associated content rights and further comprising:

means for obtaining information about a user account associated with the particular media playback device, the user account having associated usage rights;

10      means for determining, based on the information about the user account, whether the usage rights satisfy the content rights associated with the one or more media files; and

means for denying transfer of the one or more media files to the particular playback device if the usage rights do not satisfy the content rights.

15      24. The content server of claim 21, wherein the information about the particular media playback device includes a unique device identifier and device capabilities for playing media files

25      25. The content server of claim 21, further comprising:

generating a current time stamp; and

20      transferring the current time stamp to a secure location on the media playback device.

26. The content server of claim 21, wherein the expiration rules include a maximum number of playbacks for the one or more media files.

25      27. The content server of claim 21, wherein the expiration rules include a relative expiration time for the one or more media files.

28. The content server of claim 21, wherein the expiration rules include an absolute expiration time for the one or more media files.

29. The content server of claim 21, further comprising:

means for receiving a request for updating expiration rules for one or more media files;

means for obtaining information about a particular media playback device;

means for obtaining current expiration rules for the one or more media files for which an

5 update has been requested;

means for comparing the current expiration rules with expiration rules stored on the content server for the one or more media files to determine if the current expiration rules can be updated;

10 means for transferring new expiration rules from a content server to the particular media playback device if the current expiration rules can be updated;

means for requesting a user of the particular media playback device to perform an action before the current expiration rules can be updated if the current expiration rules cannot be updated; and

15 means for transferring new expiration rules from the content server to the particular media playback device if the user performs the requested action.

30. A playback device for playing media files, comprising:

means for receiving a user request to play the media file, the media file having one or more associated expiration rules;

20 means for reading the one or more expiration rules associated with the requested media file;

means for determining, based on the one or more expiration rules, if the media file has expired;

25 means for refusing playback of the media file until one or more new expiration rules have been obtained if the media file has expired; and

means for playing the media file to the user if the media file has not expired.

31. The playback device of claim 30, further comprising means for validating a storage medium on the particular playback device.